

CV-SALTS Public Education & Outreach Committee Meeting

When: **Tuesday, April 23, 2019 from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

Location: Teleconference Only

Conference #: **(605) 313-5086 Code: 512148#**



Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Approval of [March 26, 2019 Meeting Notes](#)**
3. **Outreach Matrix Update – Mary and Charles**
 - Review Documented Activities and Feedback
 - [Outreach Tracking](#) <- Link Only
 - Press and broader outreach
4. **Development of [CV-Salts PowerPoint Presentation](#)**
 - Status Update
5. **Pilot Management Zones: Outreach Needs– Mary/Charles**
 - Summary of conversations with Turlock and AID Area Management Zones
6. **[Draft P&O Study Fact Sheet](#) – Mary/Charles**
 - Status of development of P&O Fact Sheet to demonstrate value of Central Valley-wide participation, including areas of potential dedesignation
7. **Recap Next Steps and [Set Next Meeting](#)**
 - The next PEOC meeting will be Tuesday, May 21 from 3:00-4:00 PM.

One or more Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board members may attend.

CV-SALTS Public Education and Outreach Committee Meeting ACTION NOTES

Convened: March 26, 2019 from 3:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Participants: Nicole Bell (chair), Charles Gardiner, Mary Currie, Daniel Cozad, Cristel Tufenkjian, J.P. Cativiela, Parry Klassen, Anne Littlejohn

Discussion Items



Item 1: Welcome & Introductions

- Participants are as indicated above.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes of the January 8, 2019 and February 19, 2019 Meeting Notes

- J.P. Cativiela moved, and Cristel Tufenkjian seconded, and by general acclamation the January 19, 2019 Meeting Action Notes were approved. There were no objections or corrections to the February 19, 2019 Meeting Action Notes, and they were approved as distributed.

Item 3: Outreach Matrix

- Mary Currie provided an update on recent items added to the matrix.
 - Items still to be added to the matrix: the information received from the Executive Committee member briefings, and Daniel Cozad's ACWA presentation.

Item 4: ACWA Spring Conference – May 7-10

- Daniel Cozad and Parry Klassen will work on putting a panel together and developing a presentation for the conference. The presentation/panel will have a structure similar to the outreach workshops done in December, incorporating a larger GSA element for a broader level of participation.

Item 5: Executive Committee Member Interviews

- Charles Gardiner summarized the feedback received during interviews with Executive Committee members.
 - Members interviewed: Debbie Webster, Parry Klassen, Bobbi Larson, J.P. Cativiela, Debra Dunn, Jason Meadors, Willie Rivera.
 - The interviews confirmed the items and activities in the 2019 Communications Plan were appropriate. Members were supportive and eager to work with the outreach products.
 - The Outreach Matrix will be added as a standing item to future Executive Committee agendas.

Item 6: Final 4-Minute Video "Nitrates in Groundwater"

- The video was presented to the Executive Committee during the February policy meeting and is available at the following:
 - Can be viewed on CV-SALTS Website at: <https://www.cvsalinity.org/docs/videos.html>
 - Available for download at: <https://vimeo.com/322155619>

Item 7: Supplemental Public Outreach Brochure

- Committee members were asked to provide input on the focus of the proposed supplemental outreach brochure included in the 2019 Communication Plan. Suggestions from the committee:
 - An updated fact sheet on Nitrate and Salt Control Programs (covering P&O and Management Zones) that can be used for a major outreach effort to members once the State Board timeline is set.
 - A Pilot Management Zone specific piece, usable in both pilot areas. Some suggestions for content:
 - List of 6 Priority Basins & Management Zone requirements (available from Richard Meyerhoff)
 - Major goals of Management Zones

Item 7: 2019 Initial Outreach Priorities

- Priorities listed for 2019: Develop General CV-SALTS PowerPoint Presentation, Website Update with public oriented landing page (www.CVSalinity.info), Identification of Key Audiences in Six High Priority Basins, and Development of Management Zone Video.


Item 6: Recap Next Steps and Set Next Meeting – Tuesday, April 23rd, 3-4 PM



**Nitrate and Salt Permitting
Improvements
Coming for the Central Valley**

2019 Prepared by the Central Valley Salinity Coalition

1



The Problem

Nitrates and Salts are threatening the long-term health of the people and economy in the Central Valley

4/20/2019

2

There is a Nitrate Problem in the Central Valley

3

Nitrate Contamination in Groundwater

- Many small communities rely on groundwater for drinking water.
- Some of these communities can't safely use groundwater for drinking water because nitrate levels present a potential for human health impacts



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3

There is a Salt Problem in the Central Valley

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Salt Accumulations in the Central Valley

- ❁ 250,000 acres taken out of production
- ❁ 1.5 million acres have been declared salinity impaired
- ❁ Potential direct annual costs up to \$1.5 billion by 2030
- ❁ Current management activities address 15% of the annual salt load
- ❁ Long-term solutions are needed to address the remaining 85%




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Existing Regulations for Nitrates and Salts Fall Short


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- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board regulates Nitrate and Salt discharges
- Compliance with current regulations is difficult and, in some areas, even impossible.
- New, updated, flexible regulations are needed
 - Address natural diversities (climatic, hydrologic, geologic)
 - Protect water quality
 - Maintain economic activities



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CV-SALTS

A Valley-wide effort to address salts and nitrate

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What is CV-SALTS?

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Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability

- ◆ Collective effort begun in 2006
 - Agriculture, city, and industry dischargers
 - Community and environmental interests
 - Regulators
- ◆ To support a strong Central Valley economy while ensuring safe drinking water supplies
 - Existing regulations were, for many, not effective or impossible to comply with
 - Develop new regulatory approaches for nitrate and salt
- ◆ Central Valley Salinity Coalition (CVSC) formed to fund technical and scientific studies.



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CV-SALTS Goals

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1. Provide Safe Drinking Water Supplies
 - Develop short-term and long-term solutions
2. Reduce Nitrate and Salt Impacts to Water Supplies
 - Develop short-term and long-term solutions
3. Restore Groundwater Quality
 - Where reasonable and feasible



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The CV-SALTS Process

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- ❦ 2006 to 2017
 - Scientific and technical studies undertaken
 - New regulatory approaches developed for Nitrates & Salts
- ❦ 2017 and 2018
 - Salt and Nitrate Management Plan (SNMP) proposes new regulatory approaches
 - Basin Plan Amendment developed to include new regulatory approaches
 - Central Valley Regional Water Control Board adopts Basin Plan Amendment with new Nitrate Control Program and new Salt Control Program



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State Water Board Adoption Anticipated in 2019

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- 2019
- ❦ Basin Plan Amendment to be adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board, estimated June
 - ❦ Office of Administrative Law to approve the Basin Plan Amendment, estimated September
 - Begin implementing new groundwater actions for nitrate and salt
 - ❦ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to approve surface water provisions of Basin Plan Amendment, estimated November
 - Full implementation of Nitrate Control Plan and Salt Control Plan



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**CENTRAL VALLEY
SALINITY
COALITION**

Nitrate Control Program

New approaches to provide safe drinking water
and manage nitrates


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Nitrates in the Groundwater

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- Nitrate problems result from 150 years of prosperous human activity in the Central Valley
- These activities and sources include:
 - Agriculture – irrigation, fertilizer use, manure
 - Industry – manufacturing and processing facility wastewater
 - Municipalities – wastewater treatment effluent, fertilizer use
 - Rural Residents – leaking septic tanks, fertilizer use, and landfills



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COALITION**

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Nitrates in the Groundwater

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- High levels of nitrates in groundwater can result in negative health effects for people who drink the water



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Where will Implementation of New Nitrate Control Plan Begin?

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- Priority 1 Area (Red)
 - Notice to Comply within one year of Basin Plan amendments becoming effective
- Priority 2 Area (Orange)
 - Notice to Comply within 2-4 years of Basin Plan amendments becoming effective
- Remaining Areas (Green)
 - Implementation to be phased in at a later date



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Start with Priority 1 Basins

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Priority 1 Groundwater Basins

| DWR No. | Name |
|---------|------------|
| 5-22.11 | Kaweah |
| 5-22.03 | Turlock |
| 5-22.05 | Chowchilla |
| 5-22.13 | Tule |
| 5-22.02 | Modesto |
| 5-22.08 | Kings |



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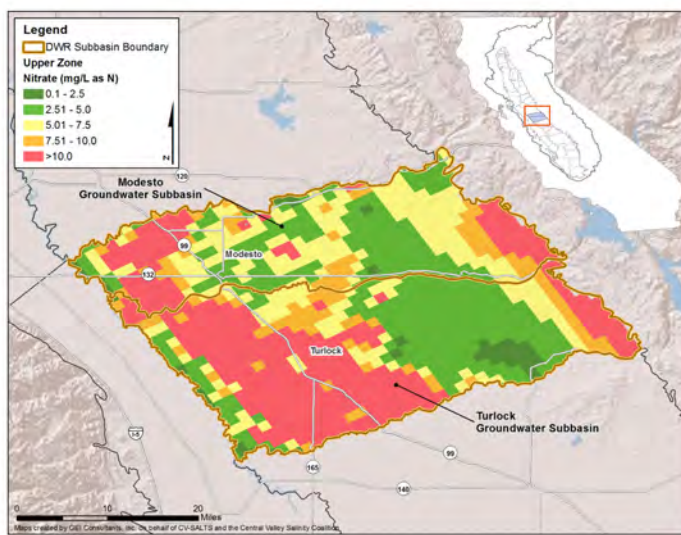
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Priority 1 Examples: Modesto & Turlock Groundwater Basins

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**Red areas are
>10.0 mg/L as
nitrogen**

**Safe water
standard is
<10mg/L as
nitrogen**

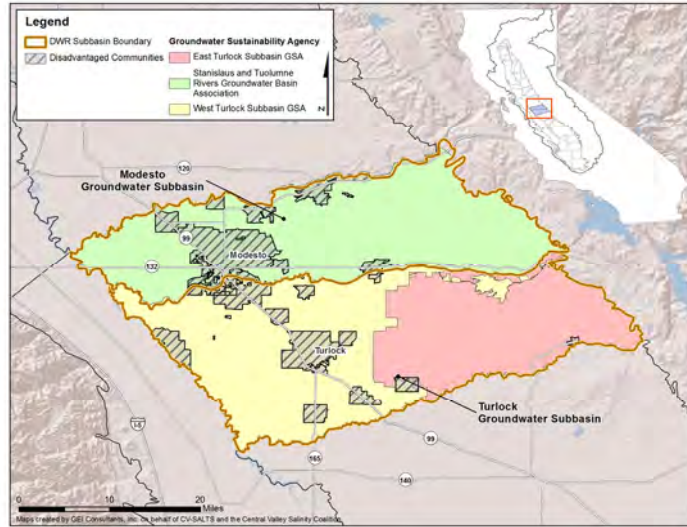


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Disadvantaged Communities Located in Priority Areas

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**Goal 1:
Provide safe drinking water supplies in small, often disadvantaged communities**



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New Nitrate Control Program

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- More Flexible
- Locally Focused
- Two Options for Compliance
 1. Form a Management Zone with other dischargers
 2. Use existing traditional permitting with additional requirements to provide safe drinking water CG1



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Slide 18

CG1 Can we say something more descriptive than "existing traditional permitting" like "site-specific" or "single-permittee"?

Charles Gardiner, 4/16/2019

New Management Zone Approach

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- ❖ Temporary exception from discharge standards
- ❖ Must assure safe drinking water first
- ❖ Shared responsibility for implementation



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Management Zone Overview

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- ❖ Locally led, Regional Board approved
 - Cooperative effort among dischargers, local government, and communities
 - Contractual agreement among dischargers
 - Regulated as a single entity by the Regional Board
- ❖ Specified deliverables & timeline from Notice to Comply
 - Management Zone Proposal and Early Action Plan (9 months)
 - Regional Board and public review
 - Final Management Zone Proposal (6 months)
 - Regional Board and public review
 - Management Zone Implementation Plan (6 months)



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What is a Management Zone?

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- **Defined area** – a discrete regulatory compliance unit for nitrates into groundwater
- **Collective implementation** – for ensuring nitrate impacted users of groundwater have safe water
- **Discharger cooperative** – for management plan to control nitrates into groundwater
 - Shorter term: best practicable treatment/control
 - Longer term: achieve balance and restore groundwater, where feasible



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Management Zone Authorities

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- Regulatory alternative for dischargers that elect this option
- Serves as alternative compliance for nitrate water quality objective
- Contractual agreement among dischargers
- May be a local agency, but not necessary
- Regional Board ensures implementation through waste discharge requirements (WDRs)



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Management Zone Formation

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Locally Led – Regional Board Approved

- ❁ Permitted dischargers work cooperatively to prepare proposal for a Management Zone
 - Identify specific geographic area/boundaries
 - Identify other permitted dischargers within geographic area
- ❁ Submit Preliminary and Final Proposals to Regional Board
 - Minimum 30-days for public comment

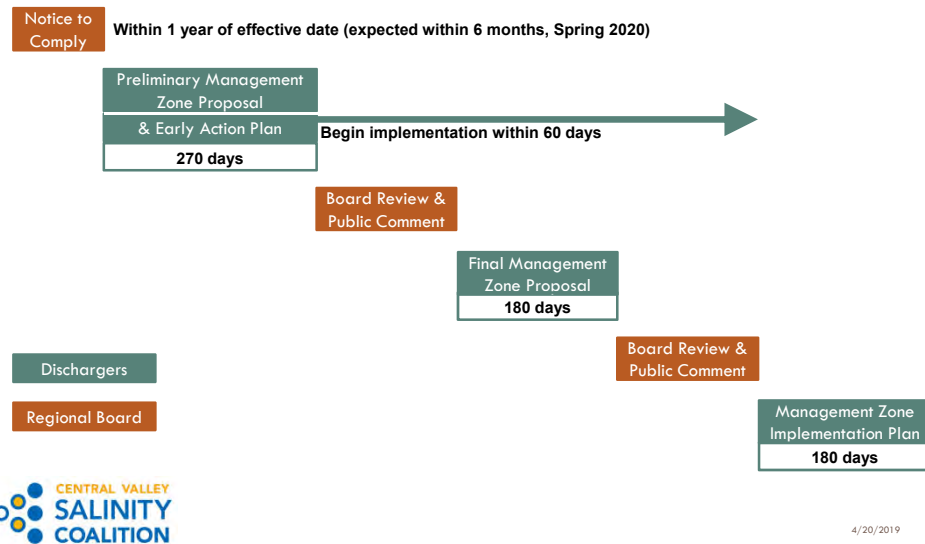


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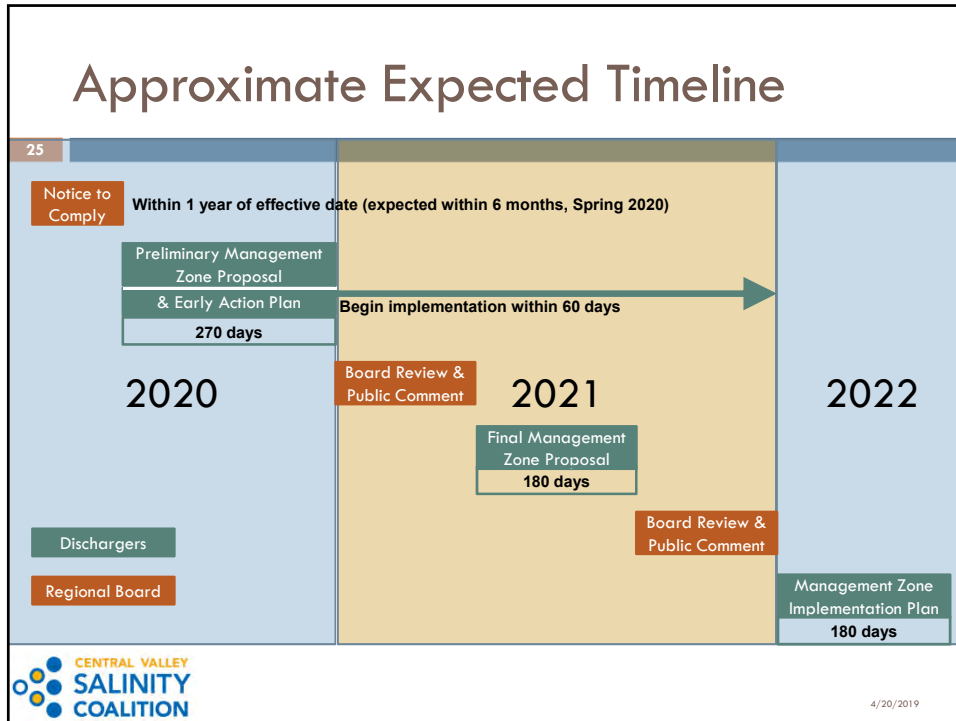
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Management Zone Regulatory Timeline

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Who Should Join a Management Zone?

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- ❖ Permitted Dischargers (agriculture, municipal, industrial, and others) that cannot comply with current nitrate limitations to protect groundwater
- ❖ Permitted Dischargers that value collaborating for
 - Prioritizing nitrate control strategies
 - Cost efficiencies
- ❖ Local governments representing communities with drinking water needs (cities and counties)
- ❖ Local water agencies and other agencies managing groundwater (GSAs)



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Benefits & Results of Joining Management Zone

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- ❖ Providing safe drinking water supplies to your community, where needed.
- ❖ Share the cost of nitrate management
- ❖ Locally manage area nitrate problems
- ❖ Apply local knowledge of soils, groundwater, and pumping to implement nitrate reduction actions
- ❖ Support a vision that manages nitrates for a viable local economy and community



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Two Pilot Management Zone Formations Underway Now

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- Turlock Groundwater Sub-basin
 - Stanislaus and Merced Counties
- Alta Irrigation District and Kings River East GSA
 - Fresno and Tulare Counties
- Both developing draft Management Zone Proposals
 - Management Zone boundaries and initial participants
 - Initial mapping of nitrate levels
 - Identification of water supplies exceeding nitrate objective
 - Early Action Plan



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What's Next

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- If you are in Priority 1 Areas
 - Identify and convene potential leaders
 - Discuss possible Management Zone boundaries
 - Review template materials developed by the pilots (August)
 - Reach out to local government and disadvantaged community support organizations
- If you are in Priority 2 Areas
 - Extra 2 to 4 years to comply
- If you don't want to participate in a Management Zone....



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Option 1: Traditional Nitrate Permitting

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- Nitrate discharges must be < 10 mg/L
- Below root zone, or before reaching the groundwater basin
- Attain or continue Best Practicable Treatment or Control (BPTC) and any permit conditions or compliance with general order or waiver requirements
- Not be contributing to an increase in nitrate in groundwater above background
- **What are the additional requirements? Need to add**



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Salinity Management Strategy

Improved strategies for managing salts across the Valley

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Salts Accumulation

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- ❖ Salt problems result from 150 years of prosperous human activity in the Central Valley
- ❖ These activities and sources include:
 - Agriculture – irrigation, fertilizer use, manure
 - Industry – manufacturing and processing facility wastewater
 - Municipalities – wastewater treatment effluent, water softeners
 - Rural Residents – leaking septic tanks, fertilizer use and landfills



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Impacts of Salt Accumulation

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- ❖ High levels of salts in streams, soils and groundwater can:
 - Pollute the soil so that it can no longer grow crops
 - Make water supplies unusable for certain uses
 - Cause taste problems in drinking water
 - Increase corrosion and damage equipment
 - Change aquatic habitats



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Salt Control Program

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Goals and Strategies

- Control rate of degradation through a “managed degradation” program
- Achieve long-term sustainability and prevent continued impacts to salt sensitive areas
 - Implement salinity management activities
- Protect beneficial uses
 - Maintain water quality that meets applicable water quality objectives
 - Pursue long-term managed restoration where reasonable, feasible and practicable
 - Apply appropriate antidegradation requirements for high quality water



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Salt Control Program

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- Regulators are considering and adopting proposed Salt Control Program
 - Regional Board, State Board, and U.S. EPA
 - Approvals expected in 2019
- Program includes long-term and short-term strategies
 - Priority & Optimization Study (P&O Study)
 - Interim Permitting Approach
- After approvals, Notices to Comply will be issued by the Regional Board (expected in 2020)



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Long-Term Salinity Management

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Priority & Optimization Study (P&O Study)

- Identify salt management projects and actions to achieve salt sustainability in the Central Valley
- Build on prior salinity studies
- Analyze existing conditions, policies, and engineering alternatives
- Consider a phased approach and funding options
- Approximately 10 years and \$10 to \$15 million



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Short-Term Salinity Management

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Interim Permitting Approach includes actions such as:

- ⊕ Continued implementation of existing pollution prevention, watershed, and salt reduction plans
- ⊕ Continued maintenance of current salinity discharge levels
- ⊕ Enforced compliance with Interim Permit Limits
- ⊕ Implementation of new salinity management practices and source control activities
- ⊕ Monitoring of salinity discharge activities, where required
- ⊕ Requiring either participation in the Prioritization & Optimization Study (P&O Study) or compliance with stringent water quality limitations



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Interim Permitting Approach

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- Permitted dischargers must comply by selecting one of two compliance pathways:
 - **Alternative Pathway:** Fund and participate in P&O Study
 - Continue existing monitoring and control activities
 - Allowed to defer more stringent and costly permitting requirements associated with Conservative Pathway until P&O Study is completed
 - **Conservative:** Demonstrate compliance with stringent permitting requirements in Salt Control Program
 - Likely more costly than Alternative pathway
- P&O Study is more likely to long-term sustainability than individual efforts through Conservative pathway



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Costs

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- Add P&O Study Costs per discharger when available



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For More Information

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CV-SALTS

- www.cvsalinity.org
- info@cvsalinity.org

Pilot Management Zones

- Turlock – Parry Klassen, klassenparry@gmail.com
- AID/Kings River East – Charlotte Gallock, cgallock@krcd.org

Regional Water Quality Control Board

- CONTACT?



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Managing Salts in the Central Valley

In May 2018, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) adopted Basin Plan amendments to address the long-term accumulation of salts in the Central Valley (Valley). The goal is to protect and preserve the beneficial uses of water for people, the environment, and the economy.¹ The Regional Board recognized that salinity accumulation is a Valley-wide problem and that all water users contribute to it. Even when a grower irrigates with high-quality water, salts from that water remain in the soil and groundwater after the harvest every year. Left unchecked, salinity accumulation will bring ongoing harm to the environment and the economy. As the Regional Board explained:

The salt accumulations have resulted in 250,000 acres taken out of production and about 1.5 million acres being salinity impaired. If not addressed, the economic impacts could be staggering. For example, if salt accumulations are not managed, the resulting direct economic costs to the Valley could exceed \$1.5 billion per year by 2030. The Valley's economic future depends on addressing these impacts.

The Basin Plan amendments give every salt discharger in the Valley a choice of permitting pathways: (1) eliminate the salt accumulation problem individually or (2) work collaboratively towards a basin-wide salinity solution. The Regional Board set a high bar for Pathway 1, the Conservative Approach—individual dischargers must prove that they have solved the salt accumulation problem by demonstrating that salt discharges will consistently remain below a salinity threshold (700 $\mu\text{mhos/cm}$). For growers, that means that irrigation water leaching below the root zone must consistently remain below this threshold. Meeting this threshold means that dischargers are not adding to the accumulation of salt in soils and groundwater.

Pathway 2, the Alternative Approach, entails a Valley-wide study of salt management actions that will lay the foundation for managing salinity accumulation long-term. Known as the Prioritization and Optimization Study (P&O Study), this process will update information on salt sources and conditions and identify management strategies and projects to reduce and remove salts. The P&O Study is expected to take 10 years at a cost of \$10 million to \$15 million.

Under both pathways, existing salt management and monitoring requirements will continue. Dischargers will continue to conduct monitoring and implement actions to meet those requirements. If a discharger chooses Pathway 1, additional studies and management actions would be required to avoid salt accumulation. If a discharger chooses Pathway 2, compliance includes paying a minor annual fee to support the P&O Study. However, additional salt management actions would be deferred for permittees on Pathway 2 until after the P&O Study is complete.

In adopting the Basin Plan amendments, the Regional Board acknowledged that some areas of the Valley have been or will be de-designated for certain beneficial uses. The P&O Study will include identifying locations that may serve as salt management areas that can be used to consolidate salts for desalinization or transport. In the course of adopting the amendments, the Regional Board expressed its intent that all permittees should financially support the P&O Study, including those with de-designated locations. The Board explained:

¹ Implementation of the Basin Plan amendments is pending approval by the State Water Resources Control Board, Office of Administrative Law, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (surface water elements only). Approvals are expected in 2019.

For example, a groundwater basin that has had one or more beneficial uses de-designated due to salinity may be considered a potential location for establishing a salt management area. Accordingly, under the Phase I Salt Control Program:

- Permittee(s) that selects either the Conservative [Pathway 1] or Alternative [Pathway 2] Permitting Approach and then requests the de-designation of one or more beneficial uses from a surface water body or all or part of a groundwater basin based on salinity shall participate in the P&O Study even after the beneficial use de-designation is approved by providing at least the minimum level of required financial support throughout the Phase I program. The P&O Study shall evaluate all areas de-designated based on salinity for suitability as salt management areas.*
- Permittee(s) that discharges to a surface water body or a groundwater basin where one or more beneficial uses were de-designated due to salinity prior to the beginning of Phase I of the Salt Control Program shall participate in the P&O Study by providing at least the minimum level of required financial support.*

The Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) developed the Basin Plan amendments and the Salt Control Program as a rational way for the Regional Board and dischargers to collectively and efficiently tackle a salinity problem that threatens the Valley's agricultural productivity. In carefully designing these efforts with extensive stakeholder input, the Regional Board and the Central Valley Salinity Coalition provided a reasonable means for all dischargers not only to participate in the P&O Study, which will be the roadmap toward salt sustainability, but to benefit on a long-term basis. The more conservative Pathway 1 is available to permittees on an individual permitting basis but would be more costly and is less likely to be a viable, achievable approach for many areas of the Valley.

Approved

CV-SALTS Meeting Calendar

2019

| 1 January | | | | | | |
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| 9 September | | | | | | |
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| 12 December | | | | | | |
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| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

Notes/Key

Light Red conflicts

Third Thursdays Where possible

Executive Committee Meetings

Policy or Admin Calls 1:00 or 1:30pm

Yellow Salty 5

Regional Board Workshops/Hearings

TAC Meeting

PEOC Committee